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COMPTEL Commends Chairman's Draft Order on Open Internet

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler shared details about a draft of the Open Internet order, which will be circulated this week and considered at the Commission's February 26 open meeting.

The following statement can be attributed to Chip Pickering, CEO of COMPTEL, the leading trade association advocating for competitive networks and competitive communications policy:

"Today, the Chairman took a momentous step in ensuring that consumers have access to an open Internet. We thank Chairman Wheeler for his leadership in providing a light-touch policy framework that will be a solid legal foundation for rules that prohibit blocking, discrimination and paid prioritization. This policy framework has worked successfully in the wireless industry, resulting in billions of dollars of investment and thriving competition. Investment across the entire Internet ecosystem will continue under this approach, as COMPTEL has recently highlighted in the record. We believe the Chairman's draft Order will continue to promote and encourage broadband investment and competition, and our members that are building fiber to wireless towers, schools and libraries, and last-mile networks in their local communities, will benefit from the open Internet policy framework.

We are encouraged that the Chairman's proposal recognizes that the open Internet and interconnection are interrelated. We also are pleased to hear that the proposal clarifies Commission jurisdiction and seeks to apply a strong legal standard when ISPs use their terminating monopolies to harm consumers. It is critical

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that the Chairman's Order does not allow last-mile interconnection to be used as a means by which ISPs can skirt the open Internet protections and limit consumers from obtaining the speeds for which they've paid. We believe that the Commission can prohibit, on a case-by-case basis, instances where interconnection practices are being used to harm consumers and the virtuous circle of innovation and investment in the Internet. COMPTTEL continues to support an approach that allows edge and network providers to obtain interconnection without paying ISP-imposed access tolls, which will avoid creating a loophole that will undermine the rest of the protections in the Order. We commend the Chairman for his leadership and for listening to the American people, as well as the good work Commission staff has performed in drafting the Order for consideration.

We look forward to continuing to work with the Chairman and Commissioners to ensure that the Order can achieve the goal of an open Internet, where anyone can build a business or exercise free speech rights without limitations.”

About COMPTTEL

Based in Washington, D.C., COMPTTEL is the leading industry association representing competitive communications service providers and their supplier partners. COMPTTEL members are entrepreneurial companies driving technological innovation and creating economic growth through competitive voice, video, and data offerings and the development and deployment of next-generation, IP-based networks and services. COMPTTEL advances its members' interests through trade shows, networking, education, and policy advocacy before Congress, the Federal Communications Commission and the courts. COMPTTEL works to ensure that competitive communications providers can continue to offer lower prices, better service, and greater innovation to consumers. For more information, visit www.comptel.org or follow us on Twitter @COMPTTEL.